

Friends

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Summary: On Onyx, Fred and Kelly discuss Kelly's relationships with John. Sidestory to Dawn. Some OOC.

Friends

**\*\*December 20, 2552\*\***

**\*\*1100 Hours, Zeta Doradus System, Dyson Sphere\*\***

It was completely unexpected.

The question came right out of the blue, startling Kelly and Fred.

Kelly had been sitting in a cave, pencil and notepad in hand. She'd been planning on doodling for the last two hours and wasn't thinking about much except how messed up the whole situation was and John.

The SPARTAN-III's, Halsey, Mendez and Linda were outside, talking. Kelly didn't care, it was all moot and she wasn't really listening.

Fiddling with notepad, she added a few extra touches to her sketch when Fred asked her the question.

"You like him... Don't you?"

It was really just \_how \_Fred 'pronounced' the word "like" but still, it was awkward.

Kelly snapped back into the real world, dropped her sketch, and figured out who he was sketching.

\_Him.\_ John.

Fred, slightly startled by her sudden response, jerked back, then clumsily picked up her sketchbook and gave hit back.

"Thanks," she said briskly. Shoving the book into a satchel, she sat, lost in thought.

"Kelly?"

Fred sounded annoyed. Like she wasn't listening.

No, that's right, she wasn't listening.

"Whaa-a-a."

Fred shook his head. "Kelly."

Kelly became slightly aggravated now. "That's my name."

"Will you listen?"

Kelly sighed and faced him.

"What were you doing just then?" Fred asked lightly. She almost took it as teasing.

"Drawing," she stated briskly.

Fred shoved her lightly. "I'm not an idiot," he smiled.

"I know," she growled, almost angry now. "So. I was drawing, you knew what I was drawing. We've been best friends since -" she rubbed her face angrily in what could mean a variety of things " -since Sam died. Now go away!"

Fred retreated, albeit still close enough for her to hit him.

"Kelly," he said softly. "Ever since those Engineers picked up that signal from slipspace you've been our lone wolf. You - "

"Which one?" she grunted, as if she wasn't really listening.

Fred's voice was gentle. "Kelly. The Slipspace Emergency Beacon. You know. It had an encoded message on it."

"No, I don't." Her voice was retreating, faltering.

Fred sat down next to her again. "UNSC Charon-Class light freighter \_Forward Unto Dawn.\_ For some reason it rebounded in Slipspace and ended up in the Dyson Sphere."\_><em>

"Yeah." Kelly's voice was muted.

"It was from John."

"I know." Kelly said quietly.

"And he's stuck in the middle of no-where in a cryopod. Slowly

running out of power, energy. He could - "

Suddenly Kelly exploded. She slammed a fist into him, he stumbled backwards, unprepared. "Kelly -"

She pummeled him, blindly, screaming, "No! No! Get out!"

Fred tried to block her, but her speed and reflexes smashed him into the side of the cave. Taking advantage of her crazed state, he grabbed her and braced himself and pushed her to the floor in a heap.

"Kelly," he growled. "Stop and sit down. That's an order."

She collapsed into a sobbing heap onto the ground. Fred felt very awkward, he'd never heard or seen Kelly break down like this.

"...Kelly..."

She grabbed her sketch and ripped it to shreds, hurled it into the fire, glaring at him through her tears.

"Kelly," Fred repeated.

Kelly suddenly slumped against the wall, no longer furious at him, but a friend who needed support. She looked up at him in tears. "Then John's dead."

\* \* \*

><p>The two SPARTANs sat quietly in the trees. Fred kept silent, Kelly was ashamed of her outburst in the cave in front of him. He let her be, he knew that she still hadn't gotten over it. He'd hurt her, and hurt her badly.<p>

"Fred."

She stopped fiddling with the grass and looked up at him.

"Kelly?"

She resumed her fiddling. "I'm sorry."

Fred nodded. "I know. It's OK."

Kelly shook her head vehemently. "No, Fred, it's not."

He frowned. "Tell me about it." He could be making a dumb mistake.

Kelly sighed. "Well - it was aboard the Gettysburg, before the First Strike."

Fred furrowed his brow. He didn't see how this worked out. "Yes?"

"We - John and I - were in a bunk together. I was on top, he was on the bottom. I we hadn't, things would be... different."

Fred bit his lip. "Go on."

"I woke up and he was reliving Halo. And it was about the Flood... And me."

Fred closed his eyes. He'd seen the shambling, monstrous xenofoms, the grotesque appendages. Kelly...

"He destroyed the bunk in his nightmare. I fell off. If I'd been on the bottom, he'd have fallen on me and beaten me to death. He was always stronger than me. I probably wouldn't have been able to do anything."

Fred opened his eyes. "And?"

"I managed to wake him up before any more damage was done. He must have thought that the world was going to end."

Kelly took a deep breath.

"So I promised him something. I promised that I'd always be there for him."

She exhaled deeply. "And now it's like breaking trust with him. Like leaving him to die."

Fred thought for a second. "No. Kelly."

She looked at him. "Hmm?"

He looked at her intensely, and put his hand on her shoulderr.. "No, Kelly. I promise you. When we do get out of here, I promise you we will find him. No matter what."

She closed her eyes. "Thank-you, Fred. You're my friend."

End  
file.